

OFFICE LANDSCAPING. The German word "Burolandschaft" translates into English as "Office Landscaping" and describes a type of office layout which has recently been introduced into this country from Europe.

The term describes not only a nonrectilinear open area layout of space but also an austere discipline of records keeping, application of the behavioral sciences to the size of office units, and a very careful control of such environmental features as color, lighting, acoustics and, particularly, the use of acoustical partitions and ornamental planters. Most of the principles which are applied in the development of an "Office Landscape" type layout are not new; the combination of ideas and the curvilinear layout are innovative.

The concept originated with a team of management consultants in Quickborner, Germany, and has been extensively applied in central Europe and in the Scandinavian countries. Several large industrial and insurance companies in the United States have established test installations which (in 1969) are still being evaluated.

The layouts used in "Office Landscaping" are best described by Figure N, which shows the placement of desks in small units, or groups, to take advantage of the precept that small units become more cohesive and develop better working relationships than larger ones. Even though a large open area is involved, the feeling of regimentation is generally avoided by the curvilinear arrangement. It is apparent that a receptionist to direct visitors is a necessity in such an arrangement.

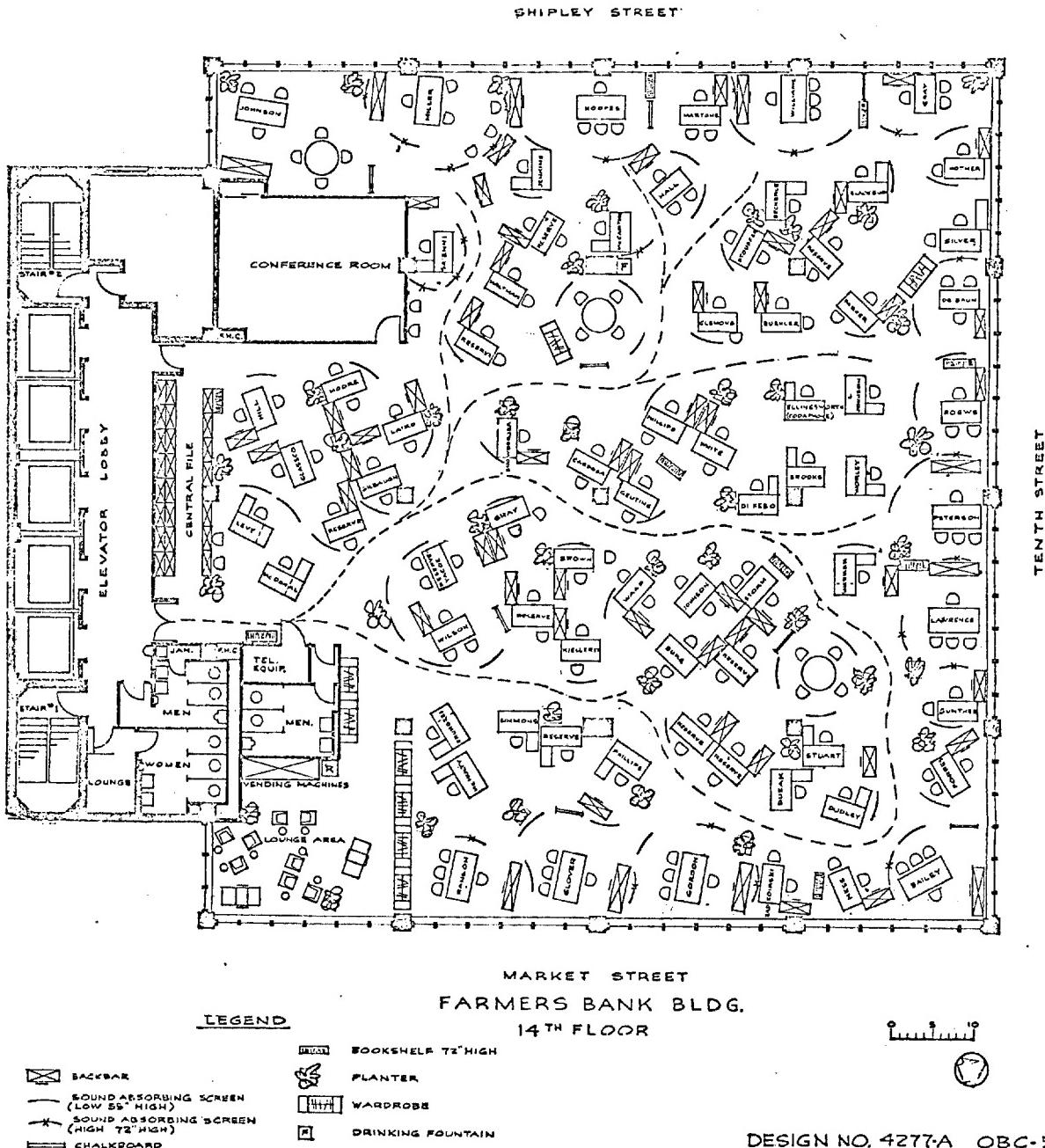
The very limited amount of private offices is generally accomplished by the use of freestanding, 4-foot-high, curved acoustical shields. It will be noted that circular conference areas are provided throughout the layout and that generous use is made of planters with either artificial or live plants to enhance appearance. Work stations are generally tables rather than desks and a limited amount of file space is provided, where needed, in an open-type basket on casters.

This requires the development of a central file area in proximity to the office. The layout must be such that people who face each other in the office be separated beyond easy hearing distance. A feature of every such layout is a small lounge area with facilities for preparation of coffee, dispensing machines, and easy chairs. Employees are encouraged to leave their desks and take advantage of the lounge area on a nonregimented basis.

The proper positioning of various components of the activity to be housed is an important factor in all layout planning. The "landscape" technique sometimes uses computers to determine adjacency requirements in larger projects.

There are a great many special considerations which must be carefully worked out in any "Office Landscape" layout. Lighting and proper visual shielding are of vital importance. Acoustics must be carefully planned to ensure the proper level of sound. Too much acoustical treatment sometimes destroys privacy and too little is distracting in a layout of this type. The "lines of sight" must be carefully studied to provide proper visual privacy in the private offices. Color is used advantageously to minimize structural features.

The proper application of the "Office Landscaping" approach to space planning requires specialized training and, in most instances, the use of specialists in its constituent disciplines such as management analysis (workflow, records, adjacency requirements, etc.), architectural engineering (sound control, decor, etc.), and space planning (office layout), and computer programming. However, most experienced space planners can use certain of the elements which comprise the technique to good advantage in situations where use of the total concept is not attainable.



APPENDIX N

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